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Subject: FYI: EPA panel to study whether glyphosate causes cancer

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EPA panel to study whether glyphosate causes cancer

Marc Heller, E&E reporter

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A U.S. EPA scientific advisory panel will meet this fall to examine any possible link between the weed killer glyphosate and cancer, a question that has led to conflicting claims among scientists.

The panel will meet Oct. 18-21, the agency said in a [notice](#) published today in the *Federal Register*.

Glyphosate, also known by the Monsanto Co. brand name Roundup, is among the most widely used herbicides. Its use climbed sharply with the advent of corn and other crops resistant to it but has stabilized in recent years as some weeds grow resistant, EPA said.

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act Scientific Advisory Panel will include some ad hoc members to be appointed by the agency. EPA is reviewing glyphosate as it does periodically for all pesticides under FIFRA.

EPA scientists have said they don't see a connection between glyphosate and cancer. But the International Agency for Research on Cancer said in March 2015 that glyphosate is a probable carcinogen, and EPA abruptly pulled its own report on the subject off its website earlier this year, raising suspicions from congressional Republicans that EPA is being unduly influenced by IARC.

House Science, Space and Technology Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) said in a statement that EPA appears to be casting aside its own findings that glyphosate isn't a cancer risk.



Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas). Photo courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The Science Committee continues to find evidence that EPA fails to recognize or acknowledge the final and complete science that its own agency conducts and instead appears to make politically motivated decisions," Smith said.

In addition, he said, EPA hasn't responded to his requests for documents related to the publishing, then removal, of the report.

"The committee will continue to pursue its oversight efforts on this matter to ensure that EPA is using sound science," Smith said.

Other organizations have said there doesn't appear to be a connection to cancer, including the European Food Safety Authority and Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/World Health Organization.

While many congressional Republicans and agricultural lobbyists defend glyphosate, environmental groups have taken up the cause against the herbicide. Some blame it for bee declines; others blame it for a variety of human ailments including obesity and autism, although the scientific community hasn't signed on to those claims.

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It's become ensnared in the debate about genetically modified foods as well. House Agriculture ranking member Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) said recently that some groups' calls for labeling of genetically engineered foods are just one step toward their ultimate goal: to ban glyphosate and make those crops less abundant (*Greenwire*, July 13).

More than 1.6 billion kilograms of glyphosate has been applied in the United States since 1974, according to a 2015 [study](#) by Charles Benbrook, then a researcher at Washington State University, published in *Environmental Sciences Europe*. Two-thirds of that was applied in the most recent decade, according to the study.

Norman Birchfield, Ph.D. / National Center for Environmental Assessment / U.S. Environmental Protection Agency /
phone: (703) 347-0174